

# Ernest H. Quayle Field Notes

April 25, 1931 - July 7, 1931

SAN DIEGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

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Quayle's notes

Death Valley trip with Stevin

April 25, 1931. Saturday

Leave San Diego 11:30 a.m. (46690)

Arrive Riverside 5:50 p.m. (46815) 125 mi

Generator all shot to hell. Delayed until 6<sup>00</sup> gals  
6<sup>25</sup> gts

April 26, 1931. Sunday. Rain rather steady & heavy.

Leave Riverside 1:15 a.m.

Arrive Victorville 4:20 p.m. (46868) 52.6 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> gals.

April 27, 1931. Broken squally clouds. Cool afternoon,  
cold at night.

Leave Victorville 9:15 a.m.

Lunched at Johannesburg — good hotel accommodations.

Camped twenty miles south of Trona among prominent Granite boulders. Large flocks of B house finches present. Horned larks, desert sparrows and wrock wrens scattering. Heard & two Le Conte Thrashers secured but one of them. Turtle doves nesting. Skinned three birds after supper. 46956 88 mi.

Set the traps in the draws and near the granite boulders. At ten o'clock had three grasshopper mice. This morning three more and two perognathus. The tiny species specimen had an injured skull.

April 28, 1931. Uncomfortably cold with snow on the top of the Panamint Range this morning. Skinned out four grasshopper mice and the

large Perognathus. Threw away the little fellow with broken skull and two immature grasshopper mice. Left camp at ten fifteen

Spent two hours in Trona getting our final provisions, water and gas. Left at 2:30 p.m. for Ballarat. Had thirteen miles of ~~gravel~~ <sup>scrapped</sup> road, then rough, <sup>rocky</sup> and steep grades over the Slate Hills. From the foot of the grade to the dry lake bed was very good, there was one place along the grade across the alkali flat where the gravel was poor and instantly we skidded sidewise, but regained the gravel tracks. The rain Sunday seems to have been very general even in these rainless Valleys.

The Sun came out and warmed things up a little today but the breeze was cool in the shade all day long.

Saw a ~~yellowbilled~~ <sup>Baldpate</sup> magpie, king birds and shrikes and desert sparrows along the road. Plenty of English Sparrows in Trona.

At Trona we had considerable trouble getting a pound of Borax. Gas was only 4¢ higher than at Victorville. Groceries are high but not exorbitant. The American Chemical & Potash Company



apparently owns the town. They employ some two-thousand people, and get most of their wages back in living expenses and amusements. Tourists are unwelcome except to buy provisions and move on.

Ballarat is a small collection of fallen or falling adobe shanties, housing three families including an old miner named Jim Sherlock to whom we were referred for information. Obtained an empty house for headquarters during our stay and unloaded the car. We will do considerable driving around from here while empty & hope to reach the summit of the Panamint Range most of the way by the car.

Set the traps out from the Mesquite trees up the alluvial fan of Pleasant Canyon. We are going around the traps twice tonight. Saw king-birds and *Phainopepla* in the Mesquite. Also a warbler, but could not determine the species. Ballarat 4 7003

April 29, 1931. Wednesday. Not so cold, fairly hot during day, One thunder cloud passed over the Argus and Slate Mountains. There was one *peromyscus* and one *perognathus* in the traps last night. One *peromyscus* and five *perognathus*

This morning. Guttered the lot and drove over to the mouth of Shepherd Canyon but could not go more than one half mile up the old stage road. We stopped just below a seepage that shows as a green strip acrossed a ravine on right of main wash looking towards the mountain. Drove on over to the Onyx Mine to Northward, where we camped in the buildings. I skinned mice all afternoon.

Set out the traps along the ridge above the house and down ravine to north. Plenty of holes.

Birds are scarce in Panamint Valley. Shot a gambel sparrow with the lizard pistol and got a shot at a Poor Will just at dusk but didn't hurt him. Wood rats appear to be plentiful but we haven't a prune in camp, for bait. I am trying apple butter soaked into absorbant cotton.

We brought Jim Sherlock over to show us the place where we could get rattlesnakes. He says he can smell them, but his nose has failed us so far. It is mild and pleasant here tonight. We get a good view of the so-called canyons of the Panamints.

10:00 p.m. Just went around the traps which had but one four-toed *Dipodomys*—the first "Dipo" in three nights—and one *perognathus*. While making down our beds we found where a pack rat had been into some dried fruit. Here is bait a plenty when it gets soaked up—for the soaking of which I am now waiting. Here also is a little more oatmeal and cornmeal of <sup>bait</sup> which I am short on this side-trip. We heard the woodrat in the building and I saw him poke his nose in our door, but he did not show himself while Joe sat waiting with the lizard gun. I ought to go to bed, and would if I knew I could sleep all night. Instead I am going around the traps again and am going to set the six Schyler's for wood rats.

A cool breeze is already blowing but a jacket is enough to keep one comfortable.

The Slate Mountains are Volcanic. There is one remnant of the Pleistocene Lake Terrace at Ballarat. We have not yet been up into the Paleozoic Panamints. The Onyx deposit over here caps a couple of small hills and ~~has~~ <sup>strikes</sup> North  $10^{\circ}$  East, and with a dip of  $21^{\circ}45'$  Elev. 2800ft. It is overlain by and interbedded with volcanic ash. There is a clear pale greenish color with streaks of reddish brown that should work up very nicely under a polish.



While baiting the traps and re-setting some mouse traps near large boulders I thought I heard a snake. Wakened Joe and we went over and pried up boulders for an hour, but found nothing whatever. Caught one *perognathus* under a rock.

Thursday, April 30, 1931 Around the traps this morning but had nothing, until I got back to the house where the Wood Rat had finally tried a soaked apricot. Nice big red legged fellow. Only four specimens to skin this morning.

Onyx 47022.

Crystal Dome Mine 47024 Elev. Aneroid 4300ft.  
Approachable by car up road above Onyx Mine.

The lizards were similar to those taken at the Onyx Mine below. The association just the same. Mouse signs rare. Returned to last night camp.

Set the traps amongst the black volcanic boulders around the Onyx capped hill. Cloudy and windy but warm in early evening. Went around trap line and had eleven *perognathus*, one *peromyscus* and one *Neotoma*. This morning had another *Neotoma* in same trap. Two broken skulls amongst *perognathus*.

Onyx 47026.

Friday, May 1, 1931

Leave Onyx Mine 9:40 a.m.

Arrive Ballarat 11:30 a.m. 47042 (66.5)

Skinned mice + rats until 5:30 then we went to have a look at Pleasant Canyon. It is some canyon the first two miles boiled up all the water we had along. We hiked about two miles farther. The grade below the falls—and there is water going over them—is a ten per cent one. We measured one pitch farther up, above where the road follows close to the stream, and it registered 200% by the clinometer. It is by far the steepest road I ever saw traveled by cars. I know the Essex will not make the grade around the falls, let alone the steep pitches farther up. We looked at the aneroid above the measured pitch and it registered 3300 ft.

Set out the traps on the steep slope south of the gorge below the falls amongst black boulders with scattering creosote bushes. It was the most likely looking place. But the catch will not be heavy.

Killed a flycatcher(?) but it spoiled on me. and a Poorwill with the lizard pistol. Heard several Poorwills while setting the traps. We raided Jim Sherlock's rainbarrow for radiator water for morning.

May 2, 1931 Saturday

Up this morning with the car to the foot of the falls grade. The traps held but one peromyscus. Forgot shells for the 410 flux. which came in from Trona last night. So had to go back down to Ballarat after them. Joe had hiked up the road ahead. Sent skinning outfit on up to Mrs. Morris's cabin. Will hike and hunt that far. The grade from the mouth of the canyon to the foot of the falls pitch averages ten percent. Now the old Essex boils climbing up here.

Last evening we saw a number of bats but I was unable to hit one with the lizard pistol. They were very plentiful.

The mouth of this canyon is cut out of a conglomerate. The boulders being slightly worn. From the Crystal Dome Mine yesterday the field glasses showed this formation as the alluvial fan of the canyon at an earlier geological age.

It is terrace below, near Ballarat at what appears to be the level of the ancient lake that filled the Panamint Valley. The canyon here is three or four hundred feet deep.



But the bedding of the conglomerate has a  $4^{\circ}$  dip up canyon towards the mountain, and hence could not have been deposited as it now stands.

Rock Wrens sing along the canyon wall, while in the willows along the stream are warblers and orioles. Shot an Audubon Warbler just above the waterfall. Also saw a goldfinch and flycatcher.

The cool mountain stream and a little shade justify the name of Pleasant Canyon. Wasps are plentiful along the stream, and flies. Also dragon flies and damosels— a beautiful big rufous dragon is here where the road crosses the stream. I just had a lunch upon water-cress and crackers— and twenty or thirty miles away the Death Valley Party of Forty Miners died of thirst! If only they had come over into this canyon and camped. But they could not have lived on the rattlesnakes unless they were more abundant in those days.

This certainly is the steepest and just about the rockiest canyon I ever climbed. Loose sliding rock without a vestige of soil and very little sand. Above the first house it opens up into a rugged walled trough with a coarse gravelly floor. The willows have ended, the stream being too deep in the gravel for them I suppose. I picked out a job for myself when I arranged to climb this canyon on foot. I would have done well to have riddled up and so have forgotten the bird shooting. If only I should come across a rattlesnake I would feel justified. The party did not bring the traps, and they are getting heavy.

The Morris cabin at the foot of a tram that came down from a peak of rock on the ridge above was a welcome sight. I thought I had two thousand feet more to climb. But the elevation here is only 3500 ft. — 600 ft. to the mile from Ballarat and two thirds of it in the last two miles. A poor place for trapping and worse for hunting birds and snakes.

A man came up the road behind me. A miner with a promoter who remained with their Essex at the lower water. The 200% grade we measured last night was too much for the city driver. One of the Clare men went down and drove the car up. And the promoter killed a rattlesnake where he was parked. If that isn't the damned luck you ever heard of, what is. We have been out one week today and haven't found one. He went over on the hillside to pick up a shiny rock and killed a snake.

Mrs. Norris is seventy years old on her next birthday. Today she hiked at least three miles along the ridge south of this canyon. She is a true daughter of the old pioneers.

Set out the traps down the canyon as far as the lowest cabin, but I'll be surprised if there is a single mouse in them in the morning. I have not seen a good mouse hole in the whole canyon.

Foot sore and weary we are turning in at nine o'clock. I skinned out the Poorwill, a hummingbird and the warbler this afternoon. But did not get the *Peromyscus* mouse done. (



Sunday, May 3, 1931

Shot a pack rat in the cabin during the night. Much to my surprise there were three *Perognathus* and seven *Peromyscus* in the traps this morning. The first trap and the last two traps were near rock slides and held the *Perognathus*. The rest were strung along the canyon floor wherever there was a level spot near a bush large enough to hold the trap. Four traps set along a trail in the willows were sprung and one was lost, probably a wood-rat but could see no tracks.

We failed to find the Mine Promoters dead rattlesnake although I was able to track the man a hundred feet up the hill to a ledge. Old Jim Sherlock says he has killed snakes while going out after burrows, and when he came back they were gone. Crows hungry enough to eat snakes would be possible here. We have not seen a buzzard in the Panamint Valley. They cannot live on broken down automobiles, as they used to thrive on Oxen.

Mrs. Morris saw a mountain sheep on her climb yesterday. Jim reports them in flocks of twenty or thirty. The Indians live on them, but the miners seldom kill any. (?) This range of mountains should be

made a game refuge for the preservation of the desert mountain Sheep.

Went out in the Valley ten miles to take some bearing on the outcrops of a low grade ore that the Morris' are locating. They were not ready until nearly eleven. During the midday heat we got but two lizards. In the desert the only time to collect is in the mornings and evenings.

We set the traps three and a half miles west of Ballarat. There were "dipos" holes but when we visited them at 10:30 p.m. we had nothing so took up the traps. The floor of this valley is the most desolate desert imaginable outside an alkali flat itself.

Monday, May 4, 1931

Ballarat 47089. Drove to Chris Wicht's place at the mouth of Surprise Canyon with the car boiling all the way up the alluvial fan, until I discovered that the fan belt wheel was disconnected. It is wobbly since I put it back on. The pieces were loose in the pan. One washer probably is lost. I should have looked for trouble when it boiled so much going over to the Onyx mine last week.

In a mine tunnel some hundred feet deep we found a bat but could not catch him. Farther up the canyon while bagging a whip-tail lizard beneath some willows alongside the road Joe saw a "wasp nest". Investigation proved it to be a bat so I shot him with the lizard pistol. (clinging to a twig of a willow tree)

This road is really steep. We hauled up in a cave at an altitude of 4400ft. The next 3000ft. are gained in less than two miles. The car made one good climb but stopped at a flume crossing in the granite (?) narrows. I can not understand why it does so poorly unless I have overheated it by running around without the fan turning. No wonder it boiled.

Our Aneroid was 900ft. <sup>low</sup> ~~off~~ at Panamint, and is 300ft. high here at Ballarat. We reached the abandoned mining town just before sundown. Had supper when a young fellow in a Ford Roadster arrived, headed for Death Valley. We induced him to camp for the night with us. We set the traps up a trail above the camp in sage, juniper and pinion pines. Then explored all the old buildings with the flash lights.



Tuesday, May 5, 1931 An old mattress in the dance hall was comfortable enough until the mountain air cooled off at eleven. Then we tried lying on the floor with the mattress over us—not so good. At one o'clock we moved into the office and built a fire in the stove, warmed up the room and kept it warm until morning.

There was one *Peromyscus* in the thirty traps. Shot two white-tailed gnat catchers up the trail, an olive green towhee and a house finch near the buildings. There was a very elusive little sparrow in the sage but I could not get a shot at it. Life is very scarce around Panamint.

We got nothing on our way down to Ballarat. Skinned out the bat, the mouse, the towhee and one gnatcatcher, then tried to sleep in spite of the flies and the heat. In the evening patched up the broken fan belt and went to bed.

Wednesday, May 6, 1931. Left for Trona at 6:00 a.m. The fan belt held until we topped the Slate Mountain Gade. Tried to save it with leather shoe lacing, but it only lasted a few miles farther. Ran easily along scraped road without heating. Joe got a red-racer and

a desert iguano along the road. Trona is truly an oasis in this vast desert. There store and garage are well stocked. We could not get a "newlite" generator so Joe bought me a new Coleman lamp \$9<sup>10</sup>. Filled up with gas and bought two new fan belts. Had a shave, icecream and lunch before leaving. We turned up a scraped road leading towards a wide open canyon, and have shaded up in a hill of granite boulders. There are pretty good trapping signs here but we will probably go on to Bruce Canyon for the night.

The mouth of this canyon is the sandiest place we have yet seen.—a coarse pale sand, affording diggings for mice and kangaroo rats. A pipe line runs out of this canyon and there is a portable well drill at work just above us. Water is gold in this country.

Very hot today with only a light breeze. We turned up the road at the sign reading Bruce Canyon, but the road lead us to the Orondo Mine. There we camped at an altitude of 4000ft. The small mammal signs looked promising, and the first gopher diggings were found.

Thursday, May 7, 1931

The woodrat caught last night with a broken skull was ~~much~~ larger than the others. Length, 303, tail, 133, hind foot, 32, ear, 25. One other was nearly as large. Last night's catch was the best yet. There were five *Perognathus* in the mouse traps, and a dozen or more *Peromyscus*. One gopher was taken in the two traps set in diggings found up a small gulch. No other sign was seen. Wood rats were taken in three rock nest, in one of the cabins, and in the mouth of the old mine tunnel.

We had to drive back to the Pumping Station for water, then rushed to Ballarat to get at the skinning. Succeeded in getting three of the *Peromyscus* skinned before they spoiled, after first skinning the more desirable *Perognathus* and the Gopher. The Woodrats keep better than anything else, because of their size I suppose.

In the evening we ran three miles down the road south from here towards Barstow. Of all this desolate region, save the grade over the alkaline lake, this half rock and half alkali region is the most barren. There was not the least temptation to set the traps. We came back, went west to the



dry wash just this side of the forks of the road 5 m. East of Ballarat.

Then we cruised along the road to the foot of the Slate Hills Gade, then three miles or so Northward. Not a snake was seen so we returned and looked over the traps. Had one young *Perognathus*.

May, 8. This morning there were four adults in the traps. All five were caught in traps set on the banks of the dry wash. No trap set out in the bed of the wash had been touched. There were signs of night snakes in the sand, but we could find none of them last night. And we still are looking for our first rattlesnake, big-red or side-winder.

Returned to Ballarat and skinned catch, threaded labels and packed dry specimens.

Yesterday was very hot, sultry and depressing. Today we have a refreshing north breeze that came up about midnight.

At 3:30 we packed up a light load and came with Jim Sherlock to Golder Canyon at the mouth of which we are camped. For ten miles south of Ballarat we saw only three gridiron lizards and no other life. Then conditions improved and as we left the alkali flat a few small birds were seen and mouse holes appeared beneath the creosote bushes. Sandy soil and with it a desert thrasher. I missed a long shot. Joe and I walked up the rocky gorge to the water well. One lizard was all we got. I shot at a small bird on a nest, lost the bird in the rabbit brush and broke three eggs in the nest. I also shot a bat which fell into the thickest brush in the canyon and so lost it. Three other shots were clean misses.

At camp I set out to put my traps out for the night and within one hundred yards of camp I ran upon the long sought red rattlesnake, the Panamint rattlesnake. Joe came a running and with a little difficulty we bagged him. At last our trip promises to be successful. The snake was no doubt out for a feed on mice. Mouse holes are quite abundant in the

black rocky slope north of camp. We are seventeen and two-tenths miles south of Ballarat. Our elevation is 1858 ft. with corrections made for the local errors of the barometer.

On the road leading up to an abandoned mine tunnel to the north of camp are several skunk holes, identified by the odor. In the mouth of the tunnel were two Saye Phoebe's and inside two bats but we caught none of them.

Joe and I went across the wash southward to hunt in the sandy region there. We ran upon a banded night snake first thing and I succeeded in shooting a couple of kangaroo rats which we cornered with the lights in the clumps of creosote bushes. Going back to camp we picked up a tiny *Perognathus* in the rocky sand just south of the wash. It is evidently of a different species than those caught elsewhere in this valley. It was midnight when we got back to camp. In the traps there was nothing. The only sprung trap was lost.



May 9, 1931 There were two adult females and two juvenile *Perognathus* in the traps this morning. The lost trap was nowhere to be found—it is the third I have lost—I think a skunk ran off with it. I spent all the forenoon skinning the six specimens.

Joe picked up a couple of side-winders over in the sands this morning. We slept under an awning until three o'clock, then ate lunch, packed up and drove southward to the mud flat just this side of Windgate Pass. Here was the outlet of the Pleistocene Lake of Panamint Valley. We could find nothing that looked as promising as the sands we hunted last night. So we returned there for the night camp.

Set the trap line in a big semi-circle with a half mile diameter.

11:10 p.m. Just returned from the traps and two hours of wandering around in the sand. One baby side-winder, two *Dipos* in the traps and two juveniles shot and caught, with one adult *Perognathus* and one juvenile were the result. The latter were also caught by hand. Saw tracks of desert thrashers several times. The large rock inhabiting *Perognathus* does not come over here.

May 10, 1931. At four:twenty this morning the desert thrashers commenced whistling. Took the gun with me as I went around the trap line and succeeded in calling a thrasher within range.

The traps held two more *Dipodomys*, and two adult *Perognathus* of the sand inhabiting species, and three tails of the same. They are so small that their whole body is on the trap when they touch the trigger.

We were packed and ready to leave at 6:30. The car started and stopped, then refused to start again for three hours. Flooded? Saw nothing of interest enroute to Ballarat except two English Sparrows just as we left camp.

Very hot today.

Skinned the best specimens before they spoiled. Then took the evening leisurely.

May 11, 1931 Left at 7:30 for Trona. On the Trona flat near the Bruce Canyon road sign we flushed a desert thrasher and got him.

Left Trona at three o'clock. Took the well traveled road to Starwood Canyon. Just after leaving the <sup>scrapped</sup> roadway we saw

a picket-pin ground squirrel go down a hole. Set a gopher trap for him. Half a mile farther we flushed three desert thrashers but could not get an effective shot at one. Went back and took the picket pin from the gopher trap. We drove to the end of the road in Homewood Canyon and camped at a barrel to which the spring water is piped. Set out the traps on both sides of and up the ravine to the west. The midnight catch was heavy. Sixteen in all, one small and five large *perognathus*, and ten *Peromyscus*.

May 12, 1931. The traps held one *Dipodomys*, four more large *perognathus*, two more *Peromyscus* and three Woodrats. Did not skin any *Peromyscus* and only the adult male woodrat. Have set one gopher trap in some rather old diggings—the only signs seen in this canyon. Why aren't they in the miners garden and the Beer Gardens below? And why only one in this part of the canyon?

Joe got a <sup>milk</sup> Snake and a spotted night snake last night, and a patched nosed snake this morning.

May 13, 1931 The catch this morning held a large proportion of *Peromyscus* which were not skinned. Several *perognathus*—one small one



from the sage-brush flat and one more *Dipodomys*. Packed and left early but went up Knight's Canyon until nine o'clock. Shot a Western Tanager there. To Ballarat and skinned specimens the rest of the day.

May 14, 1931

Took our time this morning and prepared for a week or ten day trip to Skidoo and neighborhood. Left at eleven after a drink of beer over one of the five deserted bars of Ballarat. Signed the Ballarat Inn register.

Saw little or no life until we passed the goat and burro herd and dogs of the Indian Ranch. Ran over one of the pack of nine dogs. Gave the old Indian a can of tobacco and offered him a dollar a piece for live rattlesnakes.

The climb up Wild Rose Canyon took lots of radiator water but there is splendid water at Wild Rose Spring. A steep grade brought us out on the Harrisburg Flats—sage-brush flats rather devoid of life, even of lizards. The road to Skidoo was likewise barren and the old mining camp thoroughly deserted except for two hopeful prospectors. They have seen but two rattlesnakes this

year. Both were killed before the cold storm the last of April. What chance have the rattlesnakes to hold their own in the struggle for existence when men kill every snake they ever see? They certainly are scarce. Perhaps it is too cold for them to be out yet. It certainly was too cold at Skidoo this evening.

We camped for the night in the office house of the old mine—very comfortable quarters for a cold windy night.

There were plenty of Diplo holes in conspicuous colonies along the trap line but the evening rounds were discouraging, with only two *Peromyscus* in the traps.

May 15, 1931

The morning take included three large *Perognathus* and a dozen *Peromyscus* but not one *Dipodomys*. Skinned out three of the best *Peromyscus* and the *Perigs*.

We killed a series of *Uta*s, but very little else. We explored most of the old diggings but didn't see a single bat. Ate lunch and slept until three o'clock, when we packed and pulled out for parts unknown. The prospectors told us we would find snakes in Nemo Canyon if anywhere, but we decided

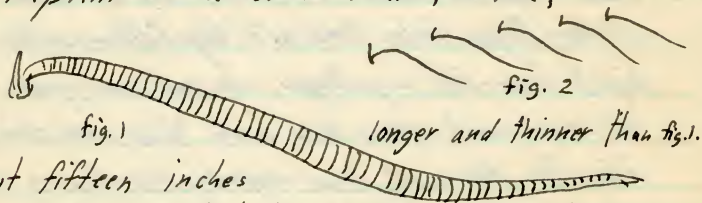
to take in Death Valley now and return to this high country after it had warmed up a little. One antelope ground squirrel was the only life observed except a few, very few, desert sparrows on the road to Emigrant Spring. Around the water tank at a gold mine — for sale — in Emigrant Canyon several birds were seen at too great a distance for identification.

Emigrant Spring is a beautiful little Oasis. A long tunnel penetrates the blue water soaked rock and a fresh concrete wall at the mouth of the tunnel reservoirs hundreds or thousands of gallons of splendid water. There we filled our canteens. The road below emerges into the wide Emigrant Wash — all wash and a few miles wide. Creosote bushes exist on the wash but we saw not even a lizard. The road shoots up onto a narrow ridge of the former lake deposit and follows this down to the junction with the Olancha-Storepipe Wells Toll road. It is a good road, very much preferable to the old county road and well worth the seventy cents we were charged for its use. The present Storepipe Wells is across the Mesquite Flat west from the old Storepipe Wells on the Ballarat sheet of the U.S.G.S.



Topographic Map, about where Salt Wells is there recorded. We found the crooked-nosed gatekeeper very agreeable and full of warnings against leaving the roads and getting hung up in the sands. We took the road towards Scotty's for two miles, left it and camped as near as we dared <sup>90</sup> to the sand dunes that are covered by "Mosquito trees" as Crook-nose called them.

Set the traps in a circle from camp to the Mesquite crowned dunes. There are plenty of Dipos holes, and plenty of Dipo tracks, but a trip around the trap line at 8:30 p.m. and another at midnight revealed not one Dipo. Only two small *Perognathus* were in the traps at midnight. We found a very disturbing track near two of the traps. It looked like the imprint of a small snake, to me,



about fifteen inches long, tapered at both ends, wide in the middle, cross marked with regularly spaced lines. <sup>fig. 1</sup> No two tracks were connected. They were spaced as in fig. 2, about three inches apart. At one end was a hook and a slight dragged mark. What made it?

A crawling snake leaves a smooth trail, no signs of belly scales are left. A lizard has legs. No legs <sup>tracks</sup> were seen. It went from one trap to the next, & one trap was sprung. There were Dipos marks, footprints and tail impressions there. Joe knows of no reptile that would leave such a track. We could find no further trace of it except at that one dune near two creosote bushes.

There were several sprung traps near Dipos burrowings. Are they the large fire-toed Dipos? One trap near camp has been sprung three times. I'm going to set a large rat trap for him now.

Went around the traps again and had to reset two or three of them. By the size of the Dipos holes they are big fellows—too big I fear for my traps. I saw one poke his nose out of a hole but did not shoot him for fear of injuring his skull.

Slept until daylight, then took up the empty unsprung traps. Tried to dig out the Dipos I had seen but failed. Their honeycombed hillocks are too intricate to follow.

May 16, 1931

Went out bird hunting with Joe for two hours and saw four birds. A king bird was very wild. Got one effective shot at one of three pileolated warblers. Got a female. Even sand lizards are scarce here. We saw tracks of two sidewinders.

We have a tarpaulin stretched between the car and a creosote capped hillock of sand. Slept most of the afternoon, after we had shot half a dozen horseflies. Houseflies were quite pesky all day. The little midges or gnats, thank God, last only until the sun gets hot. Our Aneroid is wholly unreliable as it registers 300-400 ft. here below sea level. It was quite warm even beneath our canvas awning. Blasts of hot air sweeping in from the desert like the draft above a hot air radiator. Stripped to shorts and still sweat. One crow flew over camp. I hope he had his lunch with him. He would need it to get across this place. We plan to start traveling at sundown tonight, towards Scotty's. Will set out traps somewhere along the road.

The road approached some more mesquite covered dunes at 8 mi. from Storepipe Wells.



There we set the traps putting out two *Schylers* in two large *Dipo* holes. The rest near creosote and mesquite bushes around the large dune nearest a branch road used by curious tourists to reach the sands.

After supper we drove eleven miles towards Scotty's and back without seeing a living thing except a few moths. The traps held one small *Perognathus* male and one of the *Schylers* had a large *Dipodomys*—and they are large. No wonder the mouse traps fail to catch them.

May 17, 1931. Up at daylight and around the traps. A juvenile *Perognathus* and a female *Dipodomys* made up the catch. The *Dipo* was caught by one front leg and an ear in a mouse trap.—was probably stunned a little but her skull was not broken. Called Soc from the top of the dune and he got up and prepared breakfast. We got started at five and traveled fifteen miles without seeing anything. The rocky washes are utterly barren of animal life. The sand dunes are thickly populated in comparison.

Arrived at Mesquite Springs at seven. Here was the first sign of Scotty's presence other

than the scraped road from Stavepipe Wells; which needs more scraping. A "Free Camping, do not cut the trees" greets the traveler on the corner of a coral around the water trough in the grove of ancient and large Mesquites. A boxed in spring of cool water and a clearing in the shade of the trees makes camping ideal. Our tarpaulin stretches between two large arched limbs and we are as comfortable as we were uncomfortable yesterday. A small flock of gambell quail walked unconcernedly into the brush beside the road. It was a dirty shame to kill them, but I killed up a pair for skins. We did not waste the bodies. An ashy throated flycatcher, a western yellow-throat and a pileolated warbler were shot from camp while I was skinning the mice and rats.

After lunch we went to sleep. I awake at four, and got up to get at the skinning. On the low terrace twenty-feet from camp where I had thrown the kangaroo rat bodies was a nice big red rattlesnake. It was very amusing awakening Joe with the call "Rattlesnake". He would not believe it, and couldn't get his eyes open. We bagged the snake without difficulty. Twenty days and

two snakes caught. How expensive they are, Joe's salary must be three times mine, and our expenses certainly have amounted to one hundred dollars. That would mean that each snake has cost two-hundred and fifty dollars. But Joe's twelve other snakes, and nearly three hundred lizards compensate a lot for the loss of more snakes.

Also when I awoke there was a female cow bird in camp picking up crumbs or ants or both. She is inside a box trap now waiting to be skinned. The wind has blown heavily since sundown—too bothersome for comfortable bird skinning.

May 18, 1931.

Drove fifteen miles up the valley west of Tin Mt.—Ubehebe Valley according to Mr. All<sup>en</sup> Johnson. Saw two Ring Birds, at the bluff where we turned back. Also a pair in the wash between the ash cone and the lava hill farther down the road below the crater. Found their nest with pin-feathered young. The birds were too wild to get and paid no attention to the squeaking of the young bird I took out of the nest. The nest was built



in a notch in the bluff of the wash, a few small bits of brush and what looked like cotton from an old mattress.

Returning we drove up to Scotty's and were looking the mansion over when a car came out and Mr. A. M. Johnson introduced himself. He gave us permission to collect at Mesquite Springs and all over the place. What a real Gold Mine Scotty found when he took Johnson into Death Valley to "cure him of T.B. or kill him"—quoted from Chris Wicht.

Near the rivulet of water along the cement post fence below the palace we caught a gopher snake. Mr. Johnson holding the snake by the tail showed it to the ladies in the car. "Of all the indoor sports," said the ladies. Johnson, apparently is a "good fellow," and what a place he has built out here in the desert. There are fifty men working there at present.

Two fellows stopped at Mesquite Springs returning from surveying a road to the top of Telescope Peak which Johnson plans to build.

Shot an antelope ground squirrel inside the field, and an oriole, a kingbird, a couple of warblers and one bird I do not know at camp.

May 19, 1931.

Mesquite Springs 26.5

Trap Line Grapine Seepage 28.8

Left trap line, which held six large *Perognathus*, three *Peromyscus* and three *Neotomas*, at five twenty. The traps were set up and down a couple of washes behind the low ridge just south of the seepage. The mice were caught mostly along the edges of the washes.

Bonnie Claire we reached at 7:30.

The road up Grapvine Canyon is splendid—thanks to Mr. Johnson. We had a gasline clog that hindered us considerably. There is a chilly wind blowing this morning.

Followed along the old railroad grade to the Goldfield-Beatty High way. Had trouble with clogged gas line. Expressed the snakes at Goldfield. Paid Giles a short visit + gassed up. Cleaned dirty screen + left at 1:30. Saw no life except one lizard near Bonnie Claire on return trip at 3:00 p.m.

Stopped about one mile above Scotty's fence to skin specimens. Joe collected a few common lizards. At sundown we moved on down the canyon to about

one half mile below Scotty's lower fence and set out the traps along the <sup>cave</sup> pitted bluffs of ash on the south side of the road. Moved on down to our old camp at Mesquite Springs for the night.

Along the water at Scotty's I saw a Nighthawk, a Killdeer and a Snipe. Under a pile of rocks just behind camp at the Spring I found the feathers and skeleton of a black-crowned night heron. Evidently the little boy—no matter how old he was—who wantonly shot the bird felt too ashamed to leave it unburied. The rocks had been carefully piled over the carcass in the midst of a low bushy patch.

May 20, 1931.

The traps held six gray Perognathus, a young woodrat and half a dozen of the common Peromyscus of this region. Only the pocket mice were skinned. Another Kingbird—excessively fat—and another young male Bullocks Oriole were taken during the day at camp. There were several Pileolated Warblers around—or whatever bird I am calling by that name—but I could find none with black caps. The two quail, left for seed, the day we arrived visited camp this morning. A poor-will



was heard last night. The only one heard since we were at Panamint City. Fat chance of coming across their eggs.

Joe found a strip of sand with *Dipodomys* holes present, today. It is west of the salt crusted formation west of the spring. We set out twelve steel traps, six Schyler's and five gopher traps for them. The wooden traps were set out in the draw beyond the sand near a lone mesquite tree.

At ten o'clock the Schyler's had one large and one small Dipo. The bait was taken from the other four and only one sprung. We got three shots at Dipos. I missed twice so Joe took the pistol and bowled over the third one. The wooden traps were all sprung along the sand. One near the mesquite tree held a woodrat by the toes of one front leg. He was asleep but pulled free when we arrived. I caught him at the edge of a shrub. Made six bait pans of wood and went back out at eleven. The trap that held a male at the nearest colony this time held a female. Nothing else obtained but all traps were fixed up with the wooden pans and reset. How delicately these kangaroo rats must pick

up the bait box to touch off the Schylers. Just as we returned to camp we found one of the rare Leaf-nosed night snakes. Midnight!!

May 21, 1931

The wooden traps held one large Dipr and one small black faced fellow this morning. The latter, a female suckling young, was in the trap near the Mesquite tree in the wash. The big fellows inhabit the sandy areas only. Two juveniles were taken last night and called "small" Dipr.

It kept me busy skinning them before the hair began to slip. I found the male of what I have been calling pitted warblers today. They are Yellow warblers. Put up one specimen.

Then we ate a cold meal of beans, montrey whales, and lemonade, cleaned up camp and packed. Left at six. Just below the fence corner we picked up a red racer that was half way down a mouse hole. Then for fifty miles we drive without seeing anything except a rabbit. The sands looked as if there had been quite a wind. "Five days of it," said "Crook-Nose"

He was very sociable tonight, and told us

that Scotty went up the Valley last night. At Scotty somewhat at outs with the world because he had turned over in Los Angeles and had to buy a new Lincoln car, on which the lights were not working.

And so the fellow who stopped last night, walked over to the water trough, picked up an old tin can from the ground, and drank the water from the horse trough, was Scotty. He said not a word in a sociable greeting of the desert, and when I remarked, "What a good camp this was," he sort of grunted a "Yah!" Climbed into his car and thundered on up the road.

To have visited Death Valley without seeing Scotty and his gold-mine, Mr. Johnson, would have been like drinking near beer.

To have been greeted in such a friendly manner by the millionaire at the gates of his castle, and to be grumbled at by Scotty as he drank from the horse trough with an old tin can adds a real kick to the whole affair.

The shooting business at Windgate Pass, where Scotty's brother and others scared out the dudes Scotty was taking to show



his gold mine, the unceasing bluff of the man, and this horse-trough drink do not leave a very flattering opinion of Scotty. He has put over the best One-Man-Show on Earth but it is only a show. A.M. Johnson is the man worth knowing—he is Death Valley Scotty's Gold Mine and it's a bonanza.

22  
May 22, 1931

We took it easy this morning, even had a bath and washed undies, sunbathed while they dried. Drove up the canyon and on over to Wood Canyon. Stopped at the deserted lead and silver mine and brewed a can of tobacco. Learned of the upper road into Memo Canyon—rough but passable. It is the left hand road leaving the main road in a small dry lake bed. There were no rattlesnakes at the cabins in Memo to greet us. Between the cabins were a few desert and bell sparrows nesting or with fledglings. One adult of each species was taken and two fledgling desert sparrows. At least the old birds with them looked black throated as near as I could get to them. Also saw a pair of Say Phoebe's and one was in one of the cabins at eleven o'clock. There is a nest with four eggs in it on a beam in one cabin but no bird has been observed near it. There

are flocks of house finches with fledglings watering in the tank under the eaves.

Set the traps down the road and adjacent dry washes. Caught six small Perognathus and one Peromyscus. Saw several Dip holes nearly all deserted but there are some signs of life down by lower cabin. Also saw what must be badger diggings. Wood ratsign in the cabins but did not catch any.

May 23, 1931

Leaving for Harrisburg (Perognathus) Flat at 4:00 p.m.

Ran up to Algerberry's Point and had a glorious view of Death Valley from Salt Lake to the Southern End. Funeral Mountains and Black Mountains loomed across the deep narrow valley, and beyond them the Armajosa Desert stretches with more mountain ranges bordering it. Here the east slope of the Panamint Range is revealed as a dip slope of close to  $45^\circ$ . Ravines bisect the beds across the dip and another cuts along the strike and forms a bluff of strata almost below one's feet. We did not glance to the westward but Algerberry says that on clear days Mt. Whitney can be seen — the highest and lowest spots in the United States from one view-point. Someday, when

this region is made a National Park as it well should be, here will be located one of the best concessions, unless Johnson's road to Telescope Peak proves an even more attractive place.

We camped at the Bench Mark 4899 ft. U.S.G.S. and set the traps along a half mile line running SW from there. Eight traps, however, were set near five Digo mounds near the road that runs from the Bench Mark to Harrisburg. The farthest set being 1.2 miles from camp.

Agurberry paid us a social call in the evening. After he left we went over the trap line, shivering in our sheepskin coats. There were five of the very small *Perognathus* in the traps. Poor wills were heard at dusk but we could not draw one near—too cold for whistling.

May 24, 1931

We slept comfortably by using every spare bit of canvas and all our packing cases to block the wind from coming beneath the car, and by tying the tarpaulin down to the legs of our cots. The traps held five more small *Perigs* and one *Peromyscus*. Two more small



Perigs were in two of the Dipo sets, but one trap held one long sought 5-toed Dipo by the ear, partially damaging the skull. Packed up and rushed "home" to Ballarat. Skinned out nine specimens but the rest spoiled on me. High wind all day, clouds and Jim says three drops of rain fell during the night. Packed everything except Memo + Harrisburg catches  
May 25, 1931

Jim was very sociable yesterday and this morning and told us all about his trip to Los Angeles. The Ballarat Feud Trial was again postponed — Mary Thompson has some sort of a drag. Shorty Harris, the most popular and best liked old prospector of the Death Valley region is ready to leave the hospital where he underwent an operation for prostate gland trouble — A. M. Johnson footing the bill. Shorty, so Jim reports, read in the paper where Scotty was in Los Angeles.

"The big son of a bitch didn't come to see me." quoted second hand from Jim. But Johnson had been to see the old timer. This man Johnson is the best rich man I ever met. A

a rule the more one comes into contact with the wealthy the more one likes the poor; but here is a very likable man of means. Shorty Harris is the founder of Harrisburg. Agurberry claims to have found gold there first but he took the wrong side of the mountain. The gold was just over the hill. Agurberry still works his assessments and has the cleanest camp and mine in these mountains, and all of the old prospector's hopes. Hope remains sprung eternal in the old prospector's breast. The gold will show in the next blast. And if he strikes pay dirt he will sell his claim for a few paltry thousands, have a ~~sto~~ brief but violent blow-in and be back prospecting within a month.

Jim tells us that Chris Wicht, the ancient and venerable bar tender of Ballarat, was burnt out Saturday before last. Sad news for Chris had all the modern conveniences at his place in the mouth of Surprise Canyon. And Chris is a character worthy the pen of Bret Harte. Such colorful language he uses, it has all the shades and tints of the desert mountains in which he lives.—Violent, rough, rugged, harsh, bold and picturesque.

We loitered this morning but got away for Trona before noon. The wind is still blowing—a cold south wind. Only once at the foot of the Slate Hills grade did we have to put water in the radiator. Along the flat above Trona we saw one desert iguana, a crow and a desert sparrow—the only living things seen for twenty-five miles. We wore our jackets all the way, only removing them at the village.

Our trip is to end on June 15th at which time Huey wants me to go to the Chiricahua Mountains near the border between Arizona and Mexico with him and Sefton. Joe is willing to cut our trip a little short so I can make the other one.

We spent several hours in town, filled with gas and oil and left at five p.m. Came to the foot of the Slate Hills grade and camped on the mud flat to the east of the road. Set the traps in the Creosotes between the flat and the road. There are several Dipso Colonies present but most of them look deserted. This we have found



true throughout our trip. The miners have even noticed the scarcity of the kangaroo rats as well as the paucity of rattlesnakes. It is as cold here tonight as it was at Harrisburg Saturday night. The sheepskin is just comfortable, we are warming our knees around the camp stove. It may get a little warm in Death Valley but these mountains are plenty cool in May—too cold for Snake hunting!

May 26, 1931

One Dipso baby and a young Peromyscus were in the traps last night. This morning there were three, all adult males, a Dipso, a grey Perig and a Peromyscus. I started to skin them when I heard a thrasher singing. Went hunting and stayed out until nine o'clock. Saw twelve thrashers but only succeeded in getting a couple of them. One made the mistake of flying over me as he returned from the hilltop to which he had formerly fled—the highest I ever saw one of them fly. The other was shy all the primaries on one wing and let me get within range. The rest were wild and wary. This is the rockiest area I have

yet found inhabited by these birds, but the draws are sandy and the creosote bushes are plentiful. This morning I heard them singing several times — a typical thrasher song with trills and high notes, varied to give quite a repertoire. The whistle call is entirely different — a sluring from a lower to a higher note with a throatiness that is difficult to mimic. I watched for nests in this thickly — comparatively speaking — populated area but failed to find any. An ash throated fly catcher and two or three flocks or families of desert sparrows with well fledged young were the only other birds observed.

We had our second flat tire this morning.

Drove "home" to Ballarat getting one big leopard lizard and three desert iguanas along the way. The latter we have found more often in pairs than singly.

Spent the day skinning and sleeping off a bad headache, and visiting with Jim. At last we succeeded in holding him for supper.

There is another old miner in camp now, for his health. One who served with General Crook in Arizona and is full of reminiscences. His best story is of one Sullivan, self appointed priest at the funeral of old Daly of Darwin. Everybody was good and drunk for the occasion. Not having lumber to spare for a coffin the deceased—he had starved to death because he was too proud to let his friends know his need of food—was ~~not~~ wrapped in his blankets and lowered into the grave that was none too large. When Sullivan quoted "Dust thou art to dust returneth," he stopped to pick up some dust to sprinkle upon the corpse. Losing his balance he fell into the grave, and he weighed two hundred pounds. So tightly did he jam into the narrow hole that it was an hour before the mourners were able to extricate him. Three days later someone rode by the grave and discovered that they had forgotten to fill it in. So the village assembled and finished the burial then drank a last health to old Daly.

Now I enjoy listening to these old timers tell stories of their past. An old time drinker remarked, "I saw the most pitiful sight of my life, three old booze-fighters drinking lemonade thru a straw."




May 27, 1931

Fixed tires this morning. The first was a cheap skimpy patch over a bad blow-out which gave way at one corner. The other was a sliver from the plank elevation on which I pulled to drain the crank case at Trona. There were five or six cars passed through Ballarat this morning. Three tourists turned south towards Barstow. The rest were local prospectors.

At four we started for the mouth of Goler Canyon. Few lizards seen enroute until the coarse sands at the south end of the valley were reached. Along the rocky road up to the canyon mouth one collared leopard lizard was shot. We set the traps out in the sands south of the first small ravine south of the Goler wash. Joe picked up a leaf-nosed snake and returning along the undisturbed trap line I ran upon a little sidewinder.

After supper we went out with the lantern. The traps were empty again; but two had been sprung. The sands were covered with *Dipos* tracks. Here on the soft sand we came again upon the strange tracks seen on the dunes of mesquite flat. We decided they must be sidewinder trails.

Then a little farther along near the base of the real dune against the foot of the mountain we came upon another little sidewinder. Here was an opportunity to see how those tracks were made. We watched him for several moments as he crawled away from us. So carefully do they remove their "  tail end over to the next track that the impression of the belly scales is left distinct. The sharp scratch at the front end of the track is made by the sidewise shift of the elevated portion of their forward parts. After watching the little fellow sometime I held him with a forked stick against my shoe while I secured his head between thumb and forefinger. At last I have picked up a rattlesnake with my hands, but, I would pick upon a baby.

The next trap but two to the last held a small Dipos. The moon is too bright for mouse trapping. Scorpions are not uncommon on these sands at night.

May 28, 1931

The traps held another small Dipos and three small Perigs, the latter seem different to the two obtained down lower in the sand camp of May 10.

After skinning out the catch we slowly hiked up the canyon from shade to shade until we reach the mine tunnel at the water. There we had our afternoon nap. At the waterhole several house finches and an Anna Hummer are excited at our presence. A hawk flew by and it looked rather red bellied, but I might be mistaken. My single barreled gun is a handicap. There is very little life even here at the well.

How discouraging it must be for anyone who follows the sign down on the main road to "Water 2½ miles". This mile and a quarter up the canyon is a rough steep climb.

The water is well curbed and covered by the Automobile Association. It is splendid water but a long hike for it.

The sun has been hot for a change today—very hot down in the valley.

Along the overhanging cliff of marbled limestone above the slaty rock at the well some swifts are flying, far too high to shoot.

Shot a Say Phoebe but it spoiled before I got it skinned.

Worked back to camp before sundown going from rock shade to shady rock. Set out three Schyler's at holes up the steep roadway to mine tunnel north of Canyon mouth—one in tunnel.



After supper we went clear over to the dune to set out the traps. Returned to camp at eleven with one lone gecko caught on the boulders of Goler wash.

May 29, 1931.

The traps held nothing this morning but one scorpion, though many of them were sprung. ~~The~~ Schyler held an antelope ground squirrel, an immature and an old wood rat.

Packed up and drove to Ballarat. At the south end of of the lake a Cassin Kingbird was shot from the car and two desert sparrows observed—very wild.

This was a really hot day—"water spout" weather Jim calls it. A heavy cloud gathered over the Argus Mountains as we started in the evening for the sand dunes just beyond the Indian Ranch. Set out the traps around the mesquite covered dunes reached by a wood road.

May 30, 1931

One small perognathus and six dipos were in the traps, and several other traps were sprung. Desert thrashers were heard last evening and this morning but no time to hunt them. A coyote howled just at daybreak. Rather warm all night—one blanket weather towards morning.

Packed and left for Jail Canyon before sunshine

reached us. Rather a steep road, but not at all bad, and an abundance of water and shade at the mining camp.

House finches and one or two hummers are the only bird life. In the evening set the traps, uselessly up the canyon. Collected Hylas on the way back. Caught a bat which flew into the cook shack through the open door.

Found some interesting pamphlets on the Geology of the Panamint and Randsburg districts in the shacks here, and a publication by Vogdes. This is a good camp but poor collecting.

This mine, the Burro Mine, necessarily had to play out as the ore veins seem to have occurred in included blocks of schists within the granite.

The miners here appear to have lived somewhat upon the mountain sheep—circumstantial evidence.

~~Set the~~ The traps held one *perognathus* and three *peromyscus*—but we took the Sunday off and did no skinning. Rested and slept and read. R.H. Beck would never hunt or skin on Sunday and I think he was wise. One day of rest out of seven will prevent stalemate.

In the evening we coasted in low gear to the foot of the fan below the canyon. It is steep and rocky but not as bad as Pleasant or Surprise Canyons.

June 1, 1931

James Murray, pack train with <sup>Tom</sup> Horn, Sonora, and Jim Sherlock had supper and visited with us last night.

We packed and cleaned out the house this morning and after a final farewell to Jim + James we left at nine o'clock. Sorry that Shorty Harris who has returned from the hospital was mad because Jim had put Murray in his house, and another nonconversing feud was on in Bullarat. Four families and two separate feuds. Mary Thompson against everyone else, and this break between Shorty Harris, old and white haired, and the other two grizzled and gray prospectors.

Provisioned at Trona, saw nothing from Slate Hills in. Left about two o'clock for Inyo-Kern, Brown, and Mountain Springs where we camped. There was no water at the tank two miles below, and this is just a well in the stream bed. Saw gopher signs and made six sets. The mouse traps were set out on the foot of the ridge NW of the spring.

June 2, 1931 Seven Perigs and seven Peroes were in the traps this morning. No gophers although one trap was sprung. One burrow came up between three large granite boulders, one of



which I was able to move. The tunnel followed the underside of the boulder. The dirt looks fairly fresh. Left traps set against our departure. Aneroid Barometer reads 4400 ft. elevation which is approximately correct. Granite makes up this part of the Argus Mts. as thus far observed.

Saw plenty of Dipso mounds in the flat between Brown and the dry lake beds.

Caught a gopher (♀) in the set in the granite boulders about 10 o'clock this morning.

Left at 4:40 p.m. for Junction Ranch.

Saw an abundance of gopher diggings all along the road until the Junction Flat was reached. Dipso mounds there.

Set out the traps directly behind the house. Had one small Perig at ten o'clock.

June 3/1931

The traps this morning held three more small Perigs, one Peromyscus and three Five-toed Dipoes. A Scott Oriole led me out hunting. Went up road + pipe line to a trickle of muddy water. Obtained two desert sparrows, a kingbird, a Say Phoebe and an immature Scott Oriole.

Also two antelope ground squirrels. Skinned until 2:30 a.m. At midnight there were five shippers in the traps and two little Perigs.

June 4, 1931 One more Dipos and four little Perigs in the traps. We left at 8:30 for Millsbaugh — some dump. Few birds, less mammals and even lizards are scarce. Shepherd Canyon is inaccessible from either end. Roads washed out.

Descending into the flat we were struck by the display of colors, mostly yellow and rusty red on a mesa of Malapic-volcanics. After running three miles along the road posted  $1\frac{1}{2}$  m. to Lament Spring and finding no indication of water we came back to the Malapic. Jim Sherlock said we would find rattlesnakes on the Malapic (phonetic spelling of the miners term for non-mineralized volcanics) if anywhere. In Idaho rattlesnakes, if present, are to be found along the talus at the base of lava ledges. So I followed along the foot of the ledge that bounds the mesa. I was also watching for ground squirrels. Seeing something that looked like a dead squirrel I approached for a closer view.

"Buz-z-z-z-z-z-z-z!" A large rattlesnake

had the ground squirrel swallowed as far as the shoulders. I called Joe, but the snake quickly disgorged its victim and commenced to retreat into the bush and towards the rocks behind it. With the butt end of the Shotgun I held him while Joe went back to the car for the snake stick and a sack. Before he arrived I tested out my scheme of picking the snake up with the pliers I carry in my pocket. It worked all right. So there is no need of carrying a snake stick.

I carried the ground squirrel along and for want of a better specimen made a skin of it when we returned to camp. The shoulders were badly bruised, but it made a fairly good skin. We <sup>neither</sup> heard nor saw any further sign of snakes or ground squirrels. They seem to be equally rare.

There were plenty of gopher diggings along the roads traveled today but the traps I set out going were empty upon our return. The dirt piles seem fresh for such a long time in this climate that it is almost impossible to determine just which burrow is inhabited.

At a prospect hole on a sideroad from the Lamont Spring road we saw



a mocking-bird, a fledgling logger-head shrike was taken at the Malapic ledge.

Back at the Junction Ranch the morning catch of Perigs and Dipies was so well preserved that I skinned out the former before going to bed.

The rattlesnake kept his buzzer going most of the evening. Don't blame him, for we certainly spoiled his dinner.

Thunder showers passed over this evening. A heavy one just at dark. Sometime towards morning a heavy rainstorm commenced that lasted until nine a.m., with frequent showers all day until nearly sundown.

June 5, 1931.

The Dipies were still in good shape this morning so I skinned them too. A little hair slipped on a couple of them. There has been a male Scott Oriole whistling around the place ever since we arrived, but I can't get a shot at him.

Cold, very cold, all day, too cold for collecting. In the evening we walked over to the Malapic Mesa southwest of the ranch house. Saw nothing but scenery and two water tanks northwest about one quarter mile. Went over and found them full, the water

being piped from the <sup>next</sup> canyon beyond the one we ascended the first day. Good water and plenty of it not far off the road.

June 6, 1931.

Too cold and cloudy this morning for collecting so we decided to run down to Lone Pine. The road from the Junction Ranch to Darwin, unimproved was many times smoother than the scraped washboard improved road from the Darwin Wash to Lone Pine.

Lone Pine is quite a prosperous village dependent upon the salt works of Owens Lake, tourists off the highway, fisherman and Mt. Whitney climbers.

Had the car greased and tinkered up a little. I laughed at Jim Sherlock's spark plug cleaning but if he were here he would have the laugh on me this time. Two bum plugs caused our loss of power on the grades and overheating.

June 7, 1931

Left at seven this morning and got as far as Olancha - hub cap lost. On to Darwin.

## Darwin Garage, George Allen.

This one comes for water  
This one comes for air  
This one wants directions,  
Wants to go somewhere.

This one wants a restroom  
That one wants a stamp  
This one wants a pleasant spot  
For his outfit to camp.

Many cars go speeding  
Over the road they pass  
Maybe some day someone  
Will stop in for GAS.

If your car needs greasing  
Or a tire is bum  
Stop and we will fix it,  
And do it on the run.

My suggestion is to transpose the last two stanzas.



The day was spent, for the most part, putting water in the radiator. Two new spark-plugs at Lone Pine did not help much. There is probably something wrong with the timer—we are praying that it will last out the trip.

Just before reaching Darwin we went over to an isolated patch of black lava and searched it thoroughly for snakes.

The Darwin wash penetrates the best exposure of stratified rocks I ever saw. The canyon cuts across the strike of the beds in many places. The dip is nearly  $45^{\circ}$  in many instances and from the Argus Mountains toward Panamint Valley. Zinc Hills, part of this formation, are crossed by a short steep climb up a sidewash and a steep pitch at the end. Then descends very steeply to the Darwin Wash again. Northward a level flow of lava caps the stratified Paleozoic (?) rocks. Darwin Falls, unusual scenic marvel of the desert, are formed by a dam of lava that filled the old gorge. Below the stream follows the edge of the volcanics. The falls are well worth

the tourists visit Townsend Pass looked a little too steep for our load so we took the county road, which is smoother than the Toll Road of Ikebaur's and headed for Wild Rose Canyon. Water still standing on the mud flats in Panamint Valley.

Above Wild Rose Canyon at the little dry mud lake just before Wood Canyon is reached Poorwills were in the road. Succeeded in getting two of them before it became too dark for shooting.

Shoshone Joe and his little handful of Indians were lying just off the road down ~~up~~ Wood Canyon to the Lead Mine where we secured a comfortable cabin for the night.

June 8, 1931

Spent the day putting a new valve in the car. Very cold, light showers from storm to the eastward. In the evening drove down Emigrant Wash and across Death Valley from Stovepipe Wells to Furnace Creek. Wore jackets for comfort. Stopped at the crossing of Salt Creek and netted desert minnows. Ascended Furnace Creek wash and, after a blind detour to Ryan, camped alongside the road. Saw little or nothing along the route.

June 9, 1931

Joe collected lizards while I skinned out the two Poor Wills. Drove to Dante's View — a stiff climb of six miles, and not nearly as inspiring as is Agurbury's Viewpoint. Joe picked up several lizards at our cooling stops and a juvenile rattlesnake at the top of the trail.

Drove on to Shoshone and Baker. The rain of yesterday morning was a cloudburst out here. Some bad washouts on the road. Saw but three or four kangaroo rats along the road. Pooled down to Barstow and slept thru the heat of day.

June 10, 1931

In the evening drove to Victorville for supper at the Greenspot Inn. — best eating place along the entire route. — and on to San Bernardino, Riverside & Ferris, where a tooth was pulled out of the ring gear.

June 11, 1931

Car repaired at five p.m. drove on to Fallbrook.

June 12, 1931.

Saw a rosy-bee just out of Ferris. Drove into San Diego & settled up.



Skulls checked as Packed

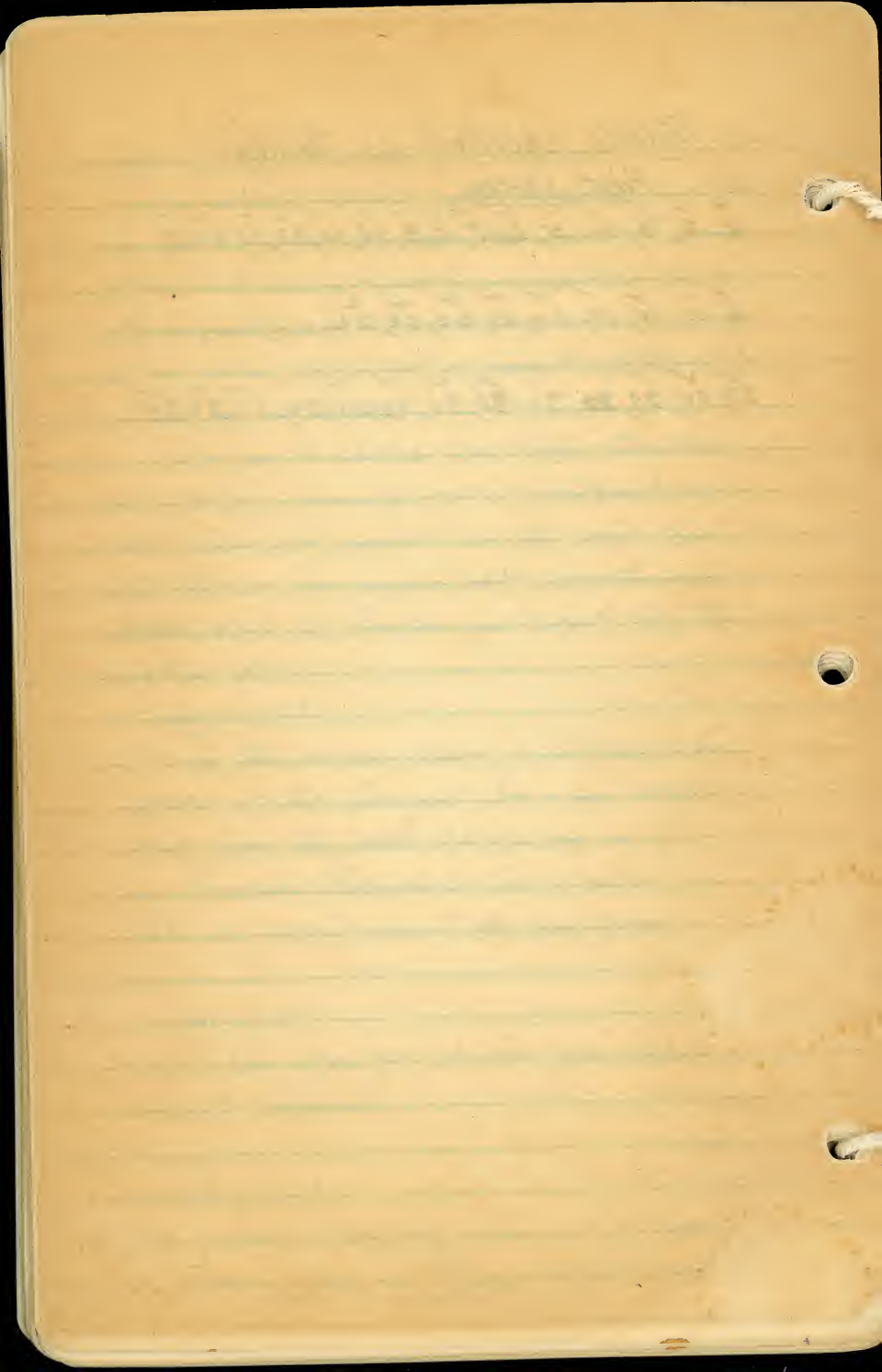
First Carton.

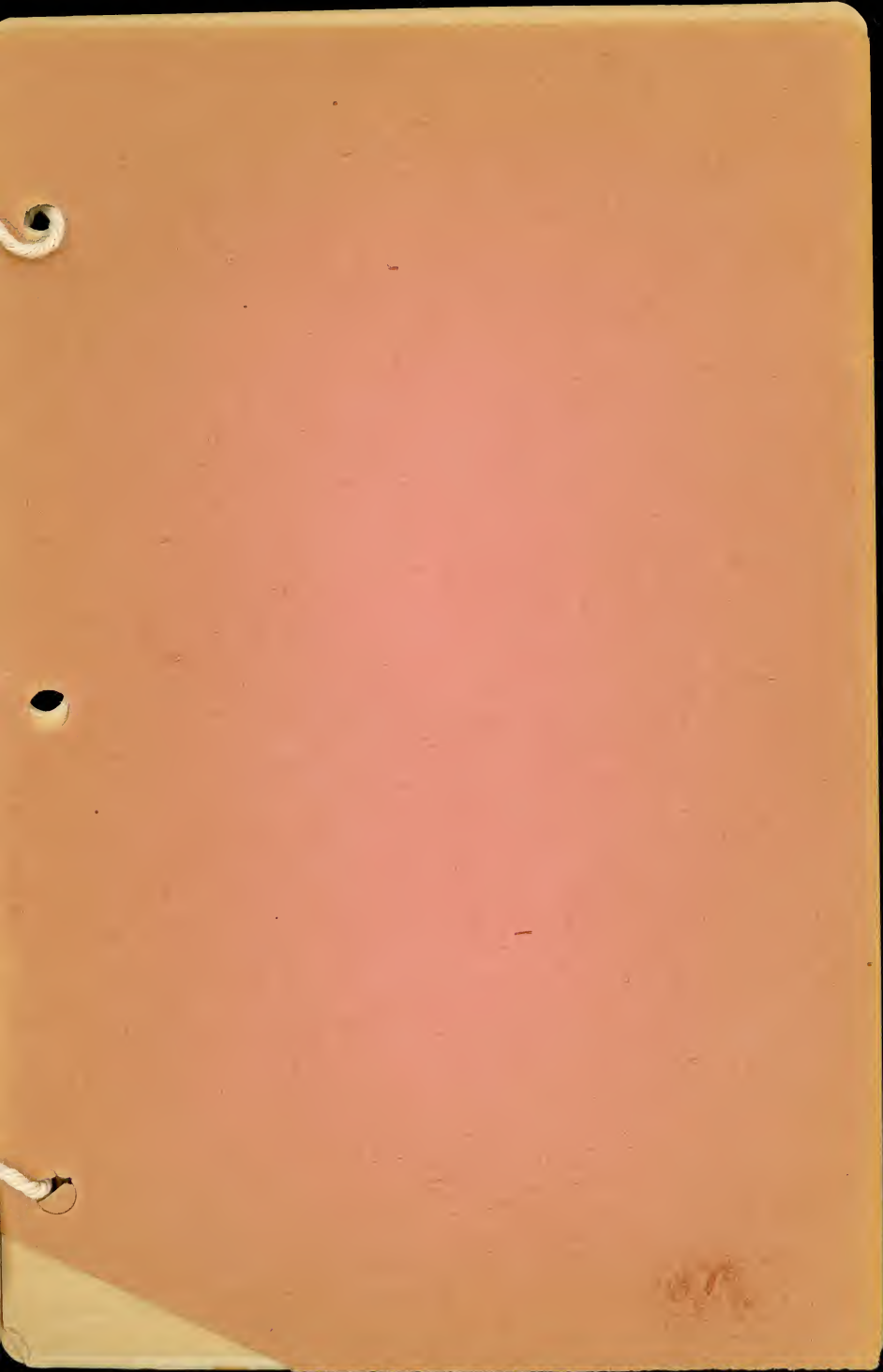
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SEFTON Trip to  
Chiricahua Mountains.

June 17, 1931

Arrived at Rustler Park in the evening.  
Camped near the spring beneath tall pine trees.  
Robins and Juncos common around camp.

June 18, 1931

Over the ridge and along trail to lower  
edge of Long Park. <sup>Crested</sup> Blue Jays very common.  
Nuthatches quite abundant in the pines and  
firs. Chickadee taken from pine tree on saddle  
just before descending to stream from Long  
Park. Red fronted warbler obtained in Aspens of  
Long Park. Bluebirds also common. Hairy wood-  
peckers scattering through pines.

Afternoon skinning.

Set out traps down the ravine below  
camp. Gopher diggings abundant every-  
where. Chipmunks not common. Two kinds  
of Peromyscus.

June 19, 1931

Spent the day skinning birds. Set traps  
down ravine near stream bed. Three long tailed Peres.  
♀ Blue throated hummer from cactus down ravine this morning.

June 20, 1931

Spent the day skinning birds. After dark  
hunted from Onion Saddle to camp. Saw no  
birds. Cloudy and light sprinkles of rain  
throughout afternoon.

June 21, 1931

Skinned birds during morning.

Light rain early in morning heard a Whip-poor-will just after dawn.

Afternoon went to Long Park. Obtained another Chickadee. Also two band tailed pigeons. Sneaked up on one and called the other. They were <sup>perching</sup> ~~roosting~~ on branches of tall trees, especially dead tops of pines & firs along ridges. Cloudy all day, light sprinkles.

June 22, 1931

Left camp at six for Bartfoot Park.

Birds more abundant on this side of ridge. Missed a male olive sided warbler. Obtained a grosbeak. Shot a flicker for a pigeon.

Obtained one pigeon on ridge and three down by a stream in the park. They respond to calling in the mornings and evenings. Saw several hummers but could not get them.

Clear to day with light Cirrus clouds.

A flat full of iris beds is called a Park up here.



June 23, 1931

Skinned specimens all day. After supper George L. Finucci, camp-tender, and I went night-hunting along the trail to Long Park. In the deep wooded ravine below the first ridge a thrush was taken. On the telephone wire at the top of the ridge was a female blue-throated hummer. Just beyond the Long Park sign we heard a whippoorwill calling, a sharp trilled whistle resembling the name vaguely with the accent upon the last syllable. George could imitate the call fairly good-enough so to get responses.

Following the call of the bird quietly we arrived at an open rock slide. The bird was evidently in the thicket beyond the loose rocks. A flying bird might have been it—a small round wing-tipped bird about the size of the California Poorwill. They are very shy and left at the first rattle of the rocks beneath our feet. We waited until darkness made our flash lights more effective then I tried to sneak up on a bird calling in the thick timber beyond the slide while George continued the whistling conversation. In a dense thicket of oak shrubs I was very close but could not catch the glimmer of eyes. The bird flew, so we returned to the trail and went on over the ridge above Long Park to the cattle-drift fence. Turned back and heard the next whippoorwill on the west slope of the Park.

Again George carried on a lively whistling duet with the bird while I climbed the ridge in the direction of the call. Again the bird was in a thicket too dense for the flashlight to penetrate. An owl had screeched at us from the ridge so I followed back in search of it. George became anxious about me and fired three shots, so I gave up and we started down the trail for camp.

As we descended from the ridge between Long Park and Rustler Park into the densely timbered ravine head an owl hooted—one short hoot followed by a series of two equally short hoots pitched at about "sol" on the "C" scale—"Hoo-hoo". We sat down, put out the lights and answered. After the second hooting we heard the soft swish of wings overhead, but the branches of the fir trees were too thick for our lights to penetrate. Moving for a clear view scared the bird away and the next hoots came from the point of the ridge above us.

At the same time a whip-poor-will started whistling from the ravine down trail. George went after him while I went after the owl.

Hooting, whistling and flashing lights and a light sprinkling of rain occupied the midnight hour in this neck of the woods. Once my light revealed four glaring eyes—wide apart and forming a square. What manner of animal is that? Dimly the forms of two deer could be seen on a steep slope where the one stood a little higher than the other, their heads nearly touching above and below. They moved off beneath the tree where the owl was perched and the screeching we had heard above Long Park seemed to follow the deer for a short ways. Following that lead I succeeded in locating the owl in the dense branches of a fir tree by sound but not by light. Maneuvering scared it away. ~~to~~

George having followed the whry-poor-will's call to a dense thicket where he could not pick up an eye reflection and the bird evidently having taken flight, came up the trail to my assistance. The owl hooted from a tree above the trail. Our two light beams formed <sup>a</sup> right angle and located the bird. The eyes were directed at George but since he had only number 12 shot and a 410 pistol I called for him to hold still. A few steps up into No. 8 range, with the flash held below the barrel, I was able to even



see the front sight bead against the body of the owl.

At one-fifteen we reached camp and wakened everyone with our story.

Both the owls and the whip-poor-wills are very rare. Six hours of hunting along three miles of trail had revealed but two owls and probably only two whip-poor-wills. The light sprinkles of rain might have been responsible.

June 24, 1931.

Again hunting along the Long Park trail. Another thrush observed in the wooded ravine. Sat half an hour or more between two clumps of red cactus flowers on the ridge, but have heard no hummers. Two chipmunks and a hairy woodpecker the only results of my still hunt here. Creepers in the pines up the ridge. *Sceloporus*(?) lizards in the rocks along the ridge.

Here is a dead pine tree completely shattered by a bolt of lightning. The stump is ten feet high and split in two. Chunks of the tree six to eight feet long haved and quartered are scattered around in a semicircle fully twenty feet from the stump, kindling wood is scattered for a hundred feet around, and a trench two feet wide and a foot deep

is turn open across the ridge at the base of the stump, rocks measuring one <sup>half</sup> foot by one foot by two feet were displaced along the trench. All very recent, there being green grass beneath the chunks of wood.

Cloudy again today, threatening thunder showers.

In the saddle of the ridge just below the shattered tree is a long iris meadow containing more grass than is usually found in these "parks". I saw a meadow mouse, and so will set out the traps there tonight if it is not too stormy. At the Long Park trail I sat beneath a fir tree through a short shower. Called and killed a hairy woodpecker while waiting. Picked it up and started for camp at the end of the shower. Came across a small grey rattlesnake. Held it with the gun until able to get hold of it behind the jaws. It was in the ferns and old leaves not twenty-five feet from the stream bed. The rattle was very faint and hardly noticeable. Shot a chipmunk on the way to camp. Two good showers and heavy ones between two and three o'clock.

Skinned birds until dusk.

Took traps and went to Long Park. Whip-poor-wills were calling as I crossed the ridge. Tried approaching one towards the mouse meadow. Failed to pick up the gleam of his eyes. Went on and set out half the traps. No answers to my frequent hooting.

Followed a whip-poor-will's call toward Long Park. About in the same place as the one on this ridge last night. Again in low dense thicket. Next calls came from bottom of the ravine. Followed down and ended in a dense copse of aspen and ash(?) on the steep slope southeast of the Park. Decided to try patience to the limit this time. When the bird called I approached closer—then waited for another spell of calling. After two hours I realized the bird was in the copse and above me. Continued search; lighting succeeded in locating a reddish eye glare on a small branch of a dead tree some thirty feet tall—just above the thicket leaves. The bird uttered a single note <sup>in</sup> ~~at~~ a low plaintive tone, during the lulls in calling. The light held beneath the gun barrels is very effective for night shooting.

Picked up the bird and went over the trap line. One *Peromyscus* and one trap sprung. Plenty of beetles. Rain from eleven to one o'clock. The woods quiet and still. Saw three deer on way to camp.

June 25, 1931

Nine o'clock breakfast does not help the collecting. George tried to cook the jack-rabbit's heart & liver. Out for the trap line. In the deep fir covered ravine slope below



the saddle were some creepers, one of which I obtained.

Two peromyscus in the traps, one of which was badly ant-eaten. While resetting the traps in more favorable places for meadow mice at the base of an old stump two quail flushed from within ten feet of me. Very likely the ~~scarce~~ quail. They split and I am seated on a log waiting for them to call or try to get together. Not a sound from them for fifteen minutes. Their flight was low and swift, the wing beats being very rapid and vibrant. A sharp quail clock was uttered as they flushed. Wish I had time to sit here until they do make a move. There are considerable ferns near the log. Over the ridge comes a whistle, high pitched and rapid.

In the evening George and I came out here to hunt whip-poor-wills while Huey and Tommie went over the ridge to Barfoot Park. At 10:30 we returned to camp having heard nothing but one owl screech, and she refused to respond to hooting. Huey heard one whip-poor-will, got close to it but could not get it.

June 26, 1931

Brought in the traps this morning. Skinned birds all day.

June 27, 1931

Skinned all day. Light showers & wind.

June 28, 1931

High wind and rain in the evening.  
Listed 167 birds of 50 kinds.

June 29, 1931

Foggy and chilly this morning.  
Everybody in the Marmon down to  
Paradise + six miles beyond. Hooded + Scott  
Orides, Cactus Wrens, + Desert Sparrows. Bats from tunnel.  
Hunted in M.Fk. of Cave Creek.

June 30, 1931

Skinned birds all day. Thunder showers.

July 1, 1931

Skinned birds. Thunder showers, light.

July 2, 1931

Skinned birds. Cloud burst in afternoon.

July 3, 1931

Skinned birds. Heavy rain during night.

July 4, 1931

Many visitors in camp.

July 5, 1931

Collected in thick woods behind Rustler Park between  
Crest Trail and Long Park trail. Nuthatches and juncos common.

Fledgling juncos, nuthatches and creepers well grown.  
Chicadees are not common.

July 6, 1931

Finished skinning and packed away the specimens.

July 7, 1931

Broke camp at 7:00 a.m. drove straight thru to  
San Diego except for stops for gas, water and feed.  
Arrived at 3:30 a.m. July 8, 1931.

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